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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, In this time of extreme violence in the streets of
3 the City of Chicago, crimes are occurring that have shocked
4 even the most hardened and desensitized members of the public,
5 not to mention those who are engaged in law enforcement; and

6 WHEREAS, As we in the legislature are daily confronted with
7 the monumental task of finding solutions to these horrendous
8 crimes that seem to become more heinous each day, we in the
9 government are more aware and dependent on the work effort of
10 law enforcement; and

11 WHEREAS, On October 31, 2007, last Halloween night, another
12 murder occurred in the Back of the Yards neighborhood of
13 Chicago; as we become so accustomed to the increasing crime in
14 our society, we can sometimes ignore circumstances of
15 particular criminal acts; in the case of the murder of Leticia
16 Barrera, we cannot ignore or avoid the heart breaking
17 circumstances of her death; Leticia, who was celebrating her
18 32nd birthday on this Halloween, was shot in the head in front
19 of her 3 children, ages 6, 4, and 2; sadly, she was also 8 1/2
20 months pregnant at the time; and

21 WHEREAS, Many people witnessed the shooting but several
22 hesitated to come forward because of their fear of the gangs;

1 it is becoming more and more apparent after each crime
2 involving elements of gang activity that witnesses will not
3 offer information for fear of retaliation and reprisals; and

4 WHEREAS, After months of work by detectives and police and
5 with the help from the community, the Chicago Police Department
6 announced a break in the case; Orlando Avila, an 18 year old
7 and an alleged Latin Saint Gang member, was charged with
8 Barrera's murder; and

9 WHEREAS, Although some tips came early in the
10 investigation, key leads came after officers took to the
11 streets; Officer Eric Wier displayed a relentless pursuit of
12 justice in this case by investigating every lead, gaining the
13 trust of the community, and refusing to let the murder be
14 forgotten; Detectives Luis Otero and Joaquin Mendoza went block
15 by block in the neighborhood, even working on their days off,
16 and worked with residents to identify witnesses; eventually,
17 those witnesses helped police identify the suspects; and

18 WHEREAS, Through the steadfast police work of Officer Eric
19 Weir and Detectives Luis Otero and Joaquin Mendoza, and under
20 the leadership of 9th District Commander Eugene Roy, the crime
21 was solved and the perpetrator was brought to justice; if not
22 for these law enforcement professionals, with their energy,
23 compassion, and unrelenting commitment to bring closure to this

1 case, the crime would have probably gone unsolved; and

2 WHEREAS, These three police officers represent the very
3 best of what the citizens of Chicago could expect from their
4 police department; these men, having been inspired and driven
5 by the most unfortunate image of the victim's three young
6 children, witnessing the homicide while dressed in their
7 Halloween costumes, can be certain that those images will
8 forever sustain in their memory and fuel their continued
9 commitment to their sworn duty and service to the citizens of
10 Chicago; therefore, be it

11 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
12 NINETY-FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
13 congratulate, commend, and thank Officer Eric Wier, Detective
14 Luis Otero, and Detective Joaquin Mendoza for their continuing
15 zeal for police work and genuine concern for their fellow human
16 beings in our society; we further offer our sincere condolences
17 to the family and children of Leticia Barrera, and hope for
18 their swift recovery from the grief of their horrific loss and
19 experience; and be it further

20 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
21 presented to Officer Eric Wier and Detectives Luis Otero and
22 Joaquin Mendoza as a symbol of our respect and esteem.